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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2010
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Letter dated 19 January 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the conclusions adopted yesterday by the Council of the European Union (Foreign Affairs) at an extraordinary meeting on the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, chaired by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (see annex). These conclusions, which reaffirm the European Union's strong support for the United Nations coordinating role in the international relief effort, record the commitments made by the European Union and its member States for humanitarian relief and assistance in recovery and reconstruction in Haiti.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 70, and of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, under the humanitarian affairs segment.

(*Signed*) Juan Antonio **Yáñez-Barnuevo**
Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations

* E/2010/100.

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Annex to the letter dated 19 January 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Council conclusions on the earthquake in Haiti

1. The European Union expresses its sincere and deepest condolences, sympathy and solidarity to the people of Haiti, of other nations and to the staff of international organisations, including the UN, for the massive loss of life and devastation caused by earthquake on 12 January, adding to the already fragile situation of the country. We share the grief of the families of those tens of thousands who have died and express our heartfelt sympathies to those who have been injured in this catastrophe.

2. In view of the proportions of the disaster and as a gesture of its solidarity with the victims of the earthquake, the High Representative in close coordination with the Spanish Presidency and the European Commission convened this extraordinary session of the Foreign Affairs Council (Foreign Affairs/Development and Humanitarian Aid) to underline the importance of the need for a rapid, coordinated response based on the humanitarian principles and to consider actions required in the course of next weeks and months.

3. The Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Haitian authorities and civil society, as well as by the UN, the Red Cross movement, other bilateral donors such as the US, the OIF and NGOs to bring aid to the people of Haiti, and pays tribute to the work of relief organizations and individuals from across the Union. The Council commends the Dominican Republic for the role it is playing in this crisis. The EU remains ready to provide assistance to the Dominican Republic.

4. The Council welcomes the global response to this crisis and strongly supports the central and overall coordinating role of the United Nations in the international relief effort.

5. The Council was briefed on the Union's response to the earthquake and the efforts to save lives and alleviate suffering. The Council welcomes the swift response by the European Union and by Member States in rapidly providing humanitarian emergency assistance and deploying humanitarian and civil protection experts from the Commission and the Member States, as well as efforts by Member States in the area of consular cooperation. The first priority has been to dispatch urban search and rescue teams, including military and civil engineering capabilities, the current focus being to provide emergency health, water and sanitation, medical facilities, shelter, logistics, telecommunications and food. The Council underlines the need for adequate security on the ground to ensure safe and unhindered access of aid deliveries. The EU and its Member States stand ready to provide additional assistance on the basis of the ongoing needs assessment, including military and civil assets, as appropriate, responding to the UN request.

6. In this regard, the Council was briefed on the needs identified by the United Nations for additional support for transport and delivery of humanitarian aid and for the action of MINUSTAH to ensure adequate security on the ground. The Council invites the High Representative to identify Member States' contributions to these needs, regarding civilian as well as military means, and to present proposals, as appropriate, for the mobilisation of these means in a coordinated manner as soon as possible.

7. The Council also welcomes the European Commission's preliminary commitment of a total of 30 million EUR in humanitarian assistance, and by Member States who have preliminarily committed a further 92 million EUR. Following the launch of the UN's Flash Appeal for 575 million USD, the EU signalled its willingness to provide further humanitarian assistance in response to emerging needs. The Council also welcomes that for early non-humanitarian assistance, focusing notably on restoration of government capabilities, the preliminary financial contribution from the EU instruments amounts to 100 million EUR. The Council welcomes the proposal of the Commission to dispatch a joint team of EU experts to assess the most pressing needs, notably to support the capacity of the Haitian authorities. With regard to possible contributions from the Member States, the Council will revert to the issue at its next meeting on 25 January 2010.

8. The Council calls for, in due course and after post emergency needs have been fully assessed, an international conference and in this context it welcomes the launching of a coordinated Post Disaster Needs Assessment with the UN and the World Bank. It emphasizes that reconstruction efforts must be based on national priorities, take into account disaster risk reduction principles, respect the aid effectiveness principles and address the necessity of reinforcing Haiti's institutions to enable them to fulfil their basic governance functions.

9. In this regard, the Council requests that an EU-wide response to the post-emergency rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction for long-term development needs of Haiti be submitted as soon as possible, which makes full use of all resources, expertise and funding available from EU and Member States, takes into account Member States' contributions to multilateral bodies and clearly addresses division of labour among the EU institutions and Member States, while fully linking relief to rehabilitation and development (LRRD). This response shall integrate EU development partners' contribution and notably the ACP Group and CARIFORUM, bearing in mind the possible impact of the current crisis on neighbouring countries. The EU response should take into account the wider efforts of the International Community in favour of Haiti. The Council takes note that the preliminary indications from the Commission on the financial contribution from the EU instruments to finance the longer-term response will amount to 200 million EUR.

10. The greatest possible synergies between all components of the response in the short term and in the medium to long term must be ensured.

11. The Council looks forward to further actions, including on paragraph 10, and will revert to these issues at its next meeting on 25 January 2010.